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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/24/2018  
TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - JANUARY 23, 2008

Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) Henault stated that 70 percent of ISAF significant events in 2007 occurred in 40 districts, largely in RC-South and RC-East, and urged nations to provide forces to deal with this reality. SHAPE briefed on Haqqani Network involvement in the Serena Hotel attack, weather effects on ISAF operations, and relief in place of U.S. forces in RC-East. Latvia announced it will provide one OMLT. The Canadian PermRep explained next steps following the issuance of the "Manley Panel" report on future Canadian involvement in ISAF.

-- Balkans: The SYG said he will meet Kosovo Prime Minister Thaci and reported on NATO's development of a public diplomacy strategy. The CMC announced NATO had established an alternate line of communication to Kosovo through Montenegro.

-- Africa ) Support to the African Union (AU): The SYG reported the AU Peace and Security Council extended the AMISOM (Somalia) mandate for six months, calling on partners to continue to provide support.

-- Iraq: No discussion.

-- Maritime Operations: CMC Henault updated the NAC on the Russian naval deployment to the Mediterranean.

-- Priorities of the Slovenian EU Presidency: In the first appearance by the EU Presidency before the NAC, Slovenian FM Rupel said Slovenia's EU Presidency would focus on the Balkans, energy security, climate change and intercultural dialogue. Rupel was positive on NATO-EU cooperation and pledged to help improve it further. He urged NATO accession for Croatia, Macedonia and Albania. Perm Reps welcomed Rupel's outreach to NATO. Many asked how to raise the profile of Afghanistan in the EU, a question that Rupel effectively ducked. Ambassador Nuland said the U.S. wanted stronger NATO-EU cooperation and the Turkish PermRep asked for help in resolving blockages in Turkey's relationship with the EU.

-- Membership Action Plan ) Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM): PM Gruevski's meeting with the NAC on FYROM's performance in the Membership Action Plan will be reported septel.

-- Statements on Political Subjects: Spain reported that the OSCE is preparing contingency plans for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo in the event Russia blocks continuation of the mission in response to Kosovo's expected coordinated declaration of independence next month.

-- AOB: No discussion.

END SUMMARY.

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Afghanistan  
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12. (C/NF) The SYG thanked the Policy Coordination Group (PCG) for its paper on follow-up to taskings from the informal Defense Ministerial in Noordwijk held in October 2007, noting that it has now been placed under silence for the NAC to decide whether to pass to Defense Ministers for the February 6 - 7 informal Defense Ministerial in Vilnius.

13. (C/NF) CMC Henault stated that 70 percent of all significant events in 2007 occurred in 40 of Afghanistan's 389 districts, most of which were in RC-South, with the remaining ones largely in RC-East. He reminded PermReps again of the need to fill ISAF's Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR), noting that present shortfalls hamper COMISAF's combat ability in the South, the very region where he needs it most. He also called on nations to eliminate or reduce to the maximum extent possible operational caveats, particularly those that restrict forces geographically, noting that such caveats constrain COMISAF in exploiting operational success and planning.

14. (C/NF) SHAPE Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations MG Wright, responding to a question from the Portuguese PermRep at the January 16 NAC, stated that ISAF had received credible intelligence twice in October 2007 and again on January 13, 2008, about possible threats to the Serena Hotel. Each of these reports was passed to the Afghan National Directorate for Security. He stated that SHAPE intelligence analysts believe that the Haqqani network was behind the Serena bombing. He described the situation in Pakistan as relatively calm at present, with the possibility for sporadic protests as the February 18 elections approached. ISAF's key ground supply lines of communications from Karachi to Kandahar (900km) and Kabul (2200km) remain open, with ISAF constantly monitoring their status.

15. (C/NF) Looking at ongoing operations, MG Wright described how the worst winter weather in Afghanistan in thirty years was keeping the activities of Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) low, and also limiting to a lesser extent the ground movements of ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces. Operation PAMIR remains the overarching theatre-wide operation, aiming to drive a wedge between OMF and the population by demonstrating the linkage between security and the Afghan government's ability to deliver development, including meeting the needs of the population during the

winter. The ISAF Theater Task Force has redeployed to Kandahar airfield from Musa Qala and is preparing for future operations. RC-West has provided over 30 tons of humanitarian relief to stricken populations on the Iranian border in Herat province. The relief in place of the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division Combat Aviation Brigade by the Combat Aviation Brigade of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division has been the main logistical focus of RC-East.

¶6. (C/NF) Latvian PermRep Eichmanis announced that Latvia had formally committed to provide one Operational Mentor Liaison Team (OMLT), thanking the U.S. for its assistance in enabling the contribution. The OMLT will be located in RC-North, where the Latvians are deployed. Importantly, the OMLT will have no caveats. Canadian PermRep McRae noted that the report of the Manley Panel on Canada's future involvement in Afghanistan after February 2009 was issued on January 22. He told PermReps he wanted to clarify that the report was meant to inform Canadian public opinion prior to a Parliamentary vote, and that it was a recommendation to the government -- not a decision. He highlighted the report's principal recommendation -- for Canada to continue with its security responsibilities beyond a February 2009 timeframe, to include a combat role, but with increasing emphasis on Afghan army training. McRae stated the recommendation is contingent on two "hard conditions" -- the deployment of an additional Allied battle group to Kandahar, and that the government acquire by February 2009 medium-lift helicopters and UAVs.

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Balkans  
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¶7. (C/NF) The SYG announced his upcoming meeting with Kosovo Prime Minister Thaci, who will be visiting Brussels January 25. The SYG intends to use this meeting to convey a strong message of NATO's commitment to stability and peace for the region. He said that COMKFOR will be meeting the Serbian CHOD to ensure that NATO's commitment is understood and to continue the good working relationship between KFOR and the Serbian military. The SYG announced that NATO is developing a detailed contingency plan for managing public information on Kosovo, including media lines, over the next few weeks. In response to a question from Latvia, the SYG noted NATO remains in permanent contact with the UN, EU, and all international players. CMC Henault informed the Council that the situation in Kosovo remained calm during the Serbian elections and that KFOR continues to conduct its operational rehearsals in order to maintain KFOR's visibility and enhance unit interoperability. He also announced that NATO conducted a January 16 reconnaissance of the new ground lines of communication (GLOC) in support of KFOR that runs through Montenegro following the recent signing of a transit agreement that will provide an alternative route of reinforcement between KFOR and EUFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In response to Germany's question regarding the affect Serbia could have on the main GLOC for KFOR, the CMC said that he would request input from SHAPE but that in the meantime he did not have any information that the Serbs would cut off the route through Serbia. In the event that occurred, KFOR could rely on the new alternate route through Montenegro.

¶8. (C/NF) Both the UK and Spain praised the SYG's announcement on NATO's public relations message, although Spain said that the public message should emphasize KFOR's role and not address issues such as status that could cause division within the Alliance. Ambassador Nuland strongly reiterated Secretary Rice's message on no further delay on Kosovo's status, saying that action was needed in February and not March. More time would only allow extremist actors on the ground to take things into their own hands. In addition, delay would mean the reaction would still be ongoing during the NATO FMs meeting in March and possibly the April NATO Summit in Bucharest.

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Africa - Support to the AU  
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¶9. (C/NF) The SYG reported that the AU Peace and Security Council extended the AMISOM (Somalia) mandate for six months and had called on partners to continue to provide support. The AU may seek a continuation of NATO's support, which is currently authorized until 21 February.

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Maritime Operations  
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¶10. (C/NF) CMC Henault updated the NAC on the Russian naval deployment to the Mediterranean. The carrier Kuznetsov and its battle group is currently operating off of the coast of Portugal, having transited the Straits of Gibraltar January ¶19. The battle group is expected to transit north and arrive in its homeport in early February, after conducting a "war-at-sea" exercise with the Black Sea Task Group. The task group is led by the cruiser Moskva, which is scheduled to make a port visit in Lisbon next week, and then Italy after that.

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Priorities of the Slovenian EU Presidency  
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¶11. (C/NF) Slovenian FM Dimitrij Rupel briefed the NAC on Slovenia's priorities for its Presidency of the EU (January ) June 2008). It was the first meeting between the NAC and the President of the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). FM Rupel and Allies agreed a briefing to the NAC by the President of the GAERC should be regularized.

¶12. (C/NF) Rupel remarked that ratification of the Lisbon Treaty would strengthen the EU's ability to implement ESDP and facilitate EU enlargement. He was positive on NATO-EU cooperation and remarked that "NATO and the EU are not just related, they are connected ... . NATO and EU are different sides of the same coin." Kosovo is ESDP's top priority. The EU agreed that UNSCR 1244 provided a legal basis to deploy an ESDP rule of law mission to Kosovo. Rupel added that he thought Serbia should be offered the carrot of a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU. Rupel also urged NATO accession for Croatia, Macedonia and Albania, and expressed his national view that accession of one or more of the countries without Macedonia "would be a disaster" for regional stability. Energy security, climate change and intercultural dialogue are other priorities for the Presidency.

¶13. (C/NF) In their comments, many PermReps asked Rupel what could be done to increase the EU's focus on Afghanistan, since it was NATO's highest priority. Rupel's responded only by saying that EUPOL, already in Afghanistan, soon would begin to have an impact on stabilization and Afghan police operations and that the Lisbon Treaty would facilitate the EU playing a larger and more effective role in Afghanistan.

¶14. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland said the U.S. wanted to see a stronger EU, a stronger NATO, and seamless cooperation between the two. The Turkish PermRep welcomed the meeting, and remarked that Turkey is often seen as the obstacle to improving NATO-EU cooperation. He said, however, that Turkey is frustrated by the EU's positions on the involvement of non-EU European Allies in ESDP missions, conclusion of a Turkey-EU security agreement, and Turkey's relationship with the European Defense Agency. He asked if Slovenia would follow up on the attempts Portugal had made during its Presidency to address these issues, which Rupel said he assumed he would.

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Statements on Political Subjects  
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¶15. (C/NF) Spain, representing Finland as Chairman in Office of the OSCE, reported that the OSCE is preparing contingency

plans for its Mission in Kosovo, should Russia object to the Mission's monthly automatic extension following Kosovo's expected coordinated declaration of independence next month.

NULAND